

Myrna Perez, one of the foremost voting experts in the country, join the ranks.

Especially now, when our democracy is in peril in many ways, it is crucial we elevate someone like Ms. Perez to the bench, someone we can trust to faithfully and equally apply the law of our great democracy.

I was proud to recommend her to President Biden, and I look forward to formally introducing her to the committee today. When I met her, as I did to interview candidates, she knocked my socks off with her brilliance, her persistence, and her strong and wonderful personality.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### VOTING LAWS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, at any particular moment, with total certainty, Washington Democrats know one of two things to be true, either American democracy is so well-functioning, so sacrosanct that nobody can possibly question or badmouth it; or democracy is in total crisis, hanging on by a thread, and only a massive, sweeping partisan overhaul by Democrats can save it.

Now, it can be hard to guess which of those opposite stories Democrats will be shouting on any given day. The narrative flip-flops at a dizzying pace.

After 2016, when voters picked Republicans, Secretary Clinton and a whole cast of senior Democrats called the new President illegitimate. Two-thirds of all Democrats said Russia had probably or definitely hacked into our voting systems and actually changed the tallies, a baseless conspiracy theory, a big lie.

Four years later, they kept insisting that democracy was broken and Democrats had to overhaul it. H.R. 1 was written and introduced on that pretense.

As recently as last summer, when the 2020 election was looking close, Democrats and cable news spent multiple weeks in literal hysterics over what they said was a massive secret election conspiracy revolving around the Postal Service—another big lie.

It was one frantic meltdown after another, constant, silly claims that our democracy would die. But last November, their story turned on a dime because Democrats got election results they liked a lot better.

Now, suddenly, our elections were no longer in crisis. Now American democracy was finely tuned, fully legitimate, and beyond reproach. For about 11 weeks, from President Biden's election through his inauguration, Democrats and their immediate friends briefly stopped being our democracy's biggest doubters and became its No. 1 fans. But now, as Democrats look ahead to the first midterm that is almost always challenging for the sitting President's party, the silly hysterics have been switched right back on.

This spring, the State of Georgia passed a mainstream election law that expanded early voting and made drop boxes permanent for the first time. The left responded with a total meltdown. Regulations that left Georgia with more flexible early voting and more flexible absentee voting than many blue States, including New York, were, insanely, called "Jim Crow 2.0." What nonsense.

Georgia Democrats scared huge corporations into promoting a moral panic that was completely and totally false. It was a shameless effort to manufacture an air of crisis to help Democrats ram their election takeover bills through the Congress, but it didn't work. The Senate rejected all the bad ideas in S. 1, so the made-up outrage had to be cranked up even higher—even higher.

So this week, State legislators from Texas decided to grab some beer, hop on a private plane, and flee the State in what they are pretending is some great moral crusade. In reality, they have just come here to Washington to snap selfies, bask in the limelight, and beg Senate Democrats to take over Texas elections.

Once again, this outrage is completely phony. The Texas Legislature was going to consider bills that would expand the minimum hours of early voting, make even more counties provide 12-hour days of early voting, and make it even easier for voters to fix mistakes on mail-in ballots so their votes would actually count. These bills would apply voter ID to mail-in ballots through a simple process that doesn't even require a driver's license number. They would clean up voter rolls to remove voters who have died or moved away.

This is not controversial stuff; it is common sense. More than 80 percent of Texans support voter ID. But Democrats have pulled out the same Chicken Little playbook that failed in Georgia, the same big lies.

Yesterday, the President of the United States delivered a speech that was set in an alternate universe. He called these mainstream State laws, these modest integrity measures that are wildly popular with Americans—now, listen to this—"the most significant test of our democracy since the Civil War." Really? This is our new President, who promised to lower the temperature, bring America back together, and rebuild a civil society where we can dialogue as fellow citizens? That is the person who is now yelling that mainstream State laws are more dangerous than two world wars, more dangerous than poll tests and Bull Connor and actual Jim Crow segregation and somehow analogous to the Civil War? That is what the President of the United States said yesterday? What utter nonsense. It would be laugh-out-loud funny if it wasn't so completely and totally irresponsible.

Here are the great sins of the Texas proposals. Here is what is apparently

so outrageous: They want to wind down a few emergency COVID voting procedures, including drive-through voting and polling places that are open all night long. I am serious. That is what this is all about, that they want to wind down two COVID voting procedures: drive-through voting and polling places that are open 24/7.

Because of the pandemic, for the first time ever, some places in Texas experimented with these brandnew, unusual measures, but now winding them down is somehow an assault on democracy? Really? If Texas is not interested in permanently letting people vote from their car windows or at 3 in the morning, then President Biden says that "they want to make it so hard and inconvenient they hope people don't vote at all," simply because you can't vote all night? Really? These brandnew exceptions for a 100-year pandemic are supposed to now be sacred pillars of our system. Things that we did last year to deal with a 100-year pandemic—to get rid of any of that is a threat to our system?

Voter ID protections are supported by majorities of White Americans, Black Americans, and Hispanic Americans, but President Biden calls these things "a 21st-century Jim Crow assault"—one big lie after another. These people think that if they just keep repeating the same melodramatic clichés, they will finally get to pull off the power grab.

These false comparisons are an insult to the actual hurdles that Americans have overcome over the years together. We have won two world wars, faced down the Soviets, unwound brutal segregation, defeated actual Jim Crow laws, and endured the 9/11 attacks, but now the sky is falling? The sky is falling because of these mainstream laws that people actually support? Because Texans want to allow 16-hour days of voting but just not in the dead of night?

Do they know that nobody outside of liberal Twitter and cable television is buying an ounce of what they are selling? The big lies, the fake outrage failed in Georgia. The big lies and fake outrage failed here in the Senate, and they will fail in Texas.

The big lies and fake outrage are totally failing to persuade the American people. Americans want to make it easy to vote but hard to cheat. Americans know that having widespread and accessible voting, along with voter ID, isn't an attack on democracy; it is the definition of democracy.

So, look, I understand the Democrats may be growing nervous about the 2022 elections. I can see why. Liberal policies are overspending, overborrowing, and hurting our economy. They are destabilizing the Middle East, weakening our southern border, and increasing violent crime across our country. But the solution is not to keep lying to the American people about the health of our democracy. The answer is not this desperate craving for an unprecedented

partisan takeover so Washington Democrats can appoint themselves the board of elections for every county and State.

The longer these fake hysterics keep up, the more Americans will keep wondering just why Democrats are this desperate—this desperate to seize control over election laws and why Democrats are this panicked by the prospect of voter integrity measures that are simple, that are fair, and that are popular with the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TEXAS

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, the Republican leader was here a few moments ago discussing an issue which I think has gotten a lot of play here lately, and that is this attempt by Democrat members of the Texas Legislature to come to Washington, DC, to protest legislation that is being moved through the legislature in the State of Texas. In fact, this is the cover of one of yesterday's newspapers—or I should say today's newspapers.

It has a photo there of all the Democrat legislators from Texas meeting with the Democrat leadership here in the U.S. Senate. Allegedly, they are here, playing hooky from their jobs in Texas, having flown in, I am told, on private jets—so much for doing something about the climate—to protest the fact that in Texas their voices are not being heard and not being given input into the legislative process there.

I point that out simply because it is really incredibly ironic. I mean, it is rich with irony. Sometimes, around here, you just say you can't make this stuff up. They are here in Washington, DC, away from Texas, which is where their jobs are, to protest the fact that their views and voice are not being heard in Texas and that the majority in Texas is running roughshod over the minority and their rights.

The same Democrats, I would add, here in Washington, DC, are trying to get rid of the legislative filibuster in the U.S. Senate, the very mechanism that historically has protected the rights of the minority and given them a voice in the legislative process, the very thing that has been used historically in a way that ensures that the Senate has to come together behind big solutions, collaborate, find that common ground, find that compromise. The Democrats here in Washington and these Democrats from Texas are all in favor of getting rid of the legislative filibuster.

Think about that. It is really pretty remarkable that they would come up here to protest what is happening in

Texas at a time when they support getting rid of the very protections that give the minority here in the U.S. Senate a voice in that legislative process.

And the other really remarkable irony about this is the issue that they are here to speak in support of S. 1, the bill that would federalize, that would nationalize elections in this country and take power away from States when it comes to regulating and administering elections, a power that has been held by States going back to the Founders.

And so they came here basically to say you need to pass H.R. 1. Well, again, what is H.R. 1? H.R. 1 is this massive Federal takeover of elections in this country, and it is also the test case for why we have got to get rid of the legislative filibuster.

I would be willing to bet that the Democrat leader at some point in the next couple of weeks is going to call up S. 1 again. We voted on it once already, but he is going to call it up again because he thinks it is good politics, and, plus, he wants to pressure his Members to do away with the legislative filibuster in order to pass S. 1 with 51 votes.

So, again, the irony of all of this, honestly, is some stuff you just flat can't make up. But I would reiterate what I have said before about S. 1: It is a solution in search of a problem. We have States around this country who are, in some cases moving to put in place election integrity measures, measures that will ensure that every vote counts and that everybody has an opportunity to vote but that people don't have an opportunity to cheat.

That is all it is about. It is about election integrity. And most of the measures that are being adopted in States around this country are simply that—nothing more, nothing less—and, again, historically consistent with the way that our election process has been governed in this country, and that is to allow States to make those to do things in a decentralized way, to not consolidate power in Washington, DC, but rather to distribute that power and make it that much harder to hack into it.

I mean, you think about it, you have 50 election systems in this country. It was what the Founders intended. They wanted to distribute power. They wanted to have a decentralized system, not one that was driven and controlled by a bureaucracy here in Washington, DC. I think that is consistent with what the American people believe ought to happen and the cases it should be when it comes to elections in this country.

So it really is interesting to see these Democrat legislators from Texas coming to Washington, coming all the way up here—again, playing hooky from their jobs in Texas—to protest a piece of legislation that is being used by the Democrat leadership to try and get rid of the legislative filibuster, the very mechanism that protects the rights and the voice of the minority in the

U.S. Senate. It has, literally, since our country's founding.

#### AGRICULTURE

MR. PRESIDENT, last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that, going forward, agriculture producers will be able to hay or graze cover crops on prevented plant acres at any time, without a reduction in their prevented planting payments.

This is good news for farmers around the country but particularly for farmers in more northern States like South Dakota, who were left at a significant disadvantage by the previous haying and grazing date. I have been working on this issue since 2019, when the effects of a tough winter, rainfall, and flooding kept many South Dakota farmers from their usual planting.

As a result, many farmers were looking to sow quick cover growing crops on the acres they were unable to plant with their usual crops. But they faced a problem. At the time, the Department of Agriculture would not allow farmers to harvest or graze these cover crops until November 1 each year. Farmers who hayed or grazed before this date faced a reduction in their prevented planting payments, which are crop insurance payments to help them cover their income loss when fields can't be planted due to flooding or other issues.

Now, November 1 was a generally pretty reasonable date for farmers in southern States. But in northern States, like South Dakota, November 1 was often too late for harvesting, thanks to the risk of snow and other late fall or early winter storms. It was also too late to maximize the use of cover crops for pasture, since the ground could freeze before cover crops were fully grazed.

So I and other Members of Congress successfully lobbied the Department of Agriculture to move up the hay and grazing date for 2019. But that was a short-term fix, I should say, for a frequent problem. So in March of 2020, I introduced, legislation, along with Senator STABENOW, to permanently remove the November 1 haying and grazing date. And I continued to lobby USDA on this issue.

I am very pleased that the Department of Agriculture has listened to farmers and the Members who represent them and permanently eliminated the November 1 date. Cover crops are a win-win situation for farmers and for the environment. They prevent soil erosion, which can pollute streams and rivers and worsen flooding. They improve soil health, which improves future crop yields and benefits the environment. And they reduce feed shortages for ag producers by providing another source of feed for their livestock.

Last week's decision by the Department of Agriculture will reduce a barrier to cover crop adaptation and ensure that farmers throughout the United States are able to reap the benefits of sowing these crops.

USDA's decision is a big victory—a big victory—for South Dakota farmers